

A STUDY OF M. BEYLE

By HONORE DE BALZAC

IN our day, literature quite evidently presents three aspects; and, so far from being a symptom of decadence, this triplicity, to use an expression coined by M. Cousin in his dislike of the word *trinity*, seems to me a natural enough effect of the abundance of literary talent: it is a tribute to the nineteenth century, which does not offer one sole and invariable form, like the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which were more or less obedient to the tyranny of a man or of a system.

These three forms, aspects or systems, by whichever name you choose to call them, exist in nature and correspond to general sympathies which were bound to declare themselves at a time when literature has seen, through the spread of knowledge, the number of its appreciators increase and the practice of reading advance with unparalleled progress.

In all generations and among all peoples there are minds that are elegiac, meditative, contemplative, minds that attach themselves more especially to the great imagery, the vast spectacles of nature, and transpose these into themselves. Hence a whole school to which I should give the name: the *Literature of Imagery*, to which belong lyrical writing, the epic and everything that springs from that way of looking at things.

There are, on the other hand, other active souls who like rapidity, movement, conciseness, sudden shocks, ac-

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tion, drama, who avoid discussion, who have little fondness for meditation, and take pleasure in results. From these, another whole system from which springs what I should call, in contrast to the former system, the *Literature of Ideas*.

Finally, certain complete beings, certain *bifrontal* intelligences embrace everything, choose both lyricism and action, drama and ode, in the belief that perfection requires a view of things as a whole. This school, which may be called *Literary Eclecticism*, demands a representation of the world as it is: imagery and ideas, the idea in the image or the image in the idea, movement and meditation. Walter Scott has entirely satisfied these eclectic natures.

Which party predominates, I do not know. I should not like anyone to infer from this natural distinction forced consequences. Thus, I do not mean to say that such and such a poet of the school of imagery is devoid of ideas, or that some other poet of the school of ideas cannot invent fine images. These three formulas apply only to the general impression left by the poets' work, to the mould into which the writer casts his thought, to the natural tendency of his mind. Every image corresponds to an idea, or, more precisely, to a *sentiment* which is a collection of ideas, and the idea does not always end in an image. The idea demands an effort in its development which does not come readily to every mind. Also the image is essentially popular, it is readily understood. Suppose that M. Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* were to appear simultaneously with *Manon Lescaut*, *Notre-Dame* would seize hold of the masses far more promptly than *Manon*, and would seem to have outrivalled it in the eyes of those who kneel before the *Vox populi*.

And yet, whatever be the kind from which a work proceeds, it will dwell in the human memory only by obeying

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the laws of the ideal and those of form. In literature, imagery and idea correspond nearly enough to what in painting we call design and colour. Rubens and Raphael are two great painters; but he would be strangely mistaken who thought that Raphael was not a colourist; and those who would refuse to Rubens the title of draughtsman may go and kneel before the painting with which the illustrious Fleming has adorned the Church of the Jesuits at Genoa, as an act of homage to design.

M. Beyle, better known by the pseudonym Stendhal, is, in my opinion, one of the most eminent masters of the *Literature of Ideas*, a school to which belong MM. Alfred de Musset, Mérimée, Léon Gozlan, Béranger, Delavigne, Gustave Planche, Madame de Girardin, Alphonse Karr and Charles Nodier. Henry Monnier belongs to it by the truth of his proverbs, which are often lacking in a root-idea, but which are nevertheless full of that naturalness and that accurate observation which are characteristic of the school.

This school, to which we already owe much fine work, recommends itself by its abundance of facts, by the sobriety of its imagery, by conciseness, by clarity, by the *petite phrase* of Voltaire, by a way of relating a story which the eighteenth century possessed, and, above all, by a sense of comedy. M. Beyle and M. Mérimée, despite their profound seriousness, have something ironical and sly in the manner in which they state their facts. With them the comedy is kept in reserve. It is the spark in the flint.

M. Victor Hugo's is undoubtedly the most eminent talent in the *Literature of Imagery*. M. Lamartine belongs to this school, which M. de Chateaubriand held over the baptismal font, and the philosophy of which was created by M. Ballanche. *Obermann* is another. MM. Auguste Barbier, Théophile Gautier, Sainte-Beuve are others, as are

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a number of feeble imitators. In some of the authors whom I have just named, the sentiment prevails sometimes over the image, as in M. de Sénancour and M. Sainte-Beuve. By his poetry rather than by his prose, M. de Vigny is seen to belong to this great school. All these poets have little sense of comedy, they know nothing of dialogue, with the exception of M. Gautier, who has a keen sense of it. M. Hugo's dialogue is too much his own speech, he does not transform himself sufficiently, he puts himself into his character, instead of becoming that character. But this school has, like the other, produced some fine work. It is remarkable for the poetic fulness of its language, for the wealth of its imagery, for the closeness of its union with nature; the other school is human, and this one divine in the sense that it tends to raise itself by *feeling* towards the very heart of creation. It prefers nature to man. The French language is indebted to it for a strong dose of poetry which was necessary, for it has developed the poetic feeling long resisted by the *positivism*—pardon the word—of our language, and the dryness stamped on it by the writers of the eighteenth century. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre were the instigators of this revolution, which I regard as fortunate.

The secret of the struggle between the Classics and the Romantics lies entirely in this quite natural disparity of minds. For two centuries past, the *Literature of Ideas* has held exclusive sway, and so the heirs of the eighteenth century naturally mistook the only system of literature that they knew for the whole of literature. Let us not blame them, these defenders of the classic! The Literature of Ideas, full of facts, closely knit, is part of the genius of France. The *Profession de foi du vicaire savoyard*, *Candide*, the *Dialogue de Sylla et d'Eucrate*, the *Considerations sur les causes de la Grandeur et de la Déca-*

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dence des Romains, the *Provinciales*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Gil Blas*, are more in the French spirit than the works of the Literature of Imagery. But we owe to this latter the poetry of which the two previous centuries had not even a suspicion, if we set aside La Fontaine, André Chénier and Racine. The Literature of Imagery is in its cradle, and already includes a number of men whose genius is incontestable; but, when I see how many the other school includes, I believe it to be at the height rather than in the decline of its dominance over our beautiful tongue. The struggle ended, one may say that the Romantics have not invented new methods, that in the theatre, for instance, those who complain of want of action have made ample use of the *tirade* and the soliloquy, and that we have not, so far, either heard the keen and compact dialogue of Beaumarchais, nor seen again the comedy of Molière, which will always be based upon reason and ideas. Comedy is the enemy of meditation and imagery. M. Hugo has gained enormously in this contest. But men of wide reading remember the war waged on M. de Chateaubriand, during the Empire; it was fully as savage, and ended sooner because M. de Chateaubriand stood alone, without the *stipante caterva* of M. Hugo, without the antagonism of the press, without the support furnished to the Romantics by the men of genius of England and Germany, better known and better appreciated.

As for the third school, which partakes of each of the other two, it has less chance than they of exciting the masses, who have little taste for the *mezzo termine*, for composite things, and see in eclecticism an arrangement that runs counter to their passions in so far as it calms them. France likes to find war in everything. In time of peace, she is still fighting. Nevertheless, Walter Scott, Madame de Staël, Cooper, George Sand seem to me to

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have distinct genius. As for myself, I take my stand under the banner of literary eclecticism for the following reason: I do not believe the portrayal of modern society to be possible by the severe method of the literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The introduction of the dramatic element, of the image, the picture, of description, of dialogue, seems to me indispensable in modern literature. Let us confess frankly that *Gil Blas* is wearisome as form: in the piling up of events and ideas there is something sterile. The idea, personified in a character, shews a finer intelligence. Plato cast his psychological ethics in the form of dialogue.

La Chartreuse de Parme is of our period and, up to the present, to my mind, is the masterpiece of the Literature of Ideas, while M. Beyle has made concessions in it to the two other schools, which are admissible by fair minds and satisfactory to both camps.

If I have so long delayed, in spite of its importance, in speaking of this book, you must understand that it was difficult for me to acquire a sort of impartiality. Even now I am not certain that I can retain it, so extraordinary, after a third, leisurely and thoughtful reading, do I find this work.

I can imagine all the mockery which my admiration for it will provoke. There will be an outcry, of course, at my infatuation, when I am simply still filled with enthusiasm after the point at which enthusiasm should have died. Men of imagination, it will be said, conceive as promptly as they forget their affection for certain works of which the common herd arrogantly and ironically protest that they can understand nothing. Simple-minded, or even intelligent persons who with their proud gaze sweep the surface of things, will say that I amuse myself with paradox, that I have, like M. Sainte-Beuve, my *chers*

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inconnus. I am incapable of compromise with the truth, that is all.

M. Beyle has written a book in which sublimity glows from chapter after chapter. He has produced, at an age when men rarely *find* monumental subjects and after having written a score of extremely intelligent volumes, a work which can be appreciated only by minds and men that are truly superior. In short, he has written *The Prince up to date*, the novel that Machiavelli would write if he were living banished from Italy in the nineteenth century.

And so the chief obstacle to the renown which M. Beyle deserves lies in the fact that *La Chartreuse de Parme* can find readers fitted to enjoy it only among diplomats, ministers, observers, the leaders of society, the most distinguished artists; in a word, among the twelve or fifteen hundred persons who are at the head of things in Europe. Do not be surprised, therefore, if, in the ten months since this surprising work was published, there has not been a single journalist who has either read, or understood, or studied it, who has announced, analysed and praised it, who has even alluded to it. I, who, I think, have some understanding of the matter, I have read it for the third time in the last few days: I have found the book finer even than before, and have felt in my heart the kind of happiness that comes from the opportunity of doing a good action.

Is it not doing a good action to try to do justice to a man of immense talent, who will appear to have genius only in the eyes of a few privileged beings and whom the transcendency of his ideas deprives of that immediate but fleeting popularity which the courtiers of the public seek and which great souls despise? If the mediocre knew that they had a chance of raising themselves to the level of the sublime by understanding them, *La Chartreuse de*

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Parme would have as many readers as *Clarissa Harlowe* had on its first appearance.

There are in admiration that is made legitimate by conscience ineffable delights. Therefore all that I am going to say here I address to the pure and noble hearts which, in spite of certain pessimistic declamations, exist in every country, like undiscovered pleiads, among the families of minds devoted to the worship of art. Has not humanity, from generation to generation, has it not here below its constellations of souls, its heaven, its angels, to use the favourite expression of the great Swedish prophet, Swedenborg, a chosen people for whom true artists work and whose judgments make them ready to accept privation, the insolence of upstarts and the indifference of governments?

You will pardon me, I hope, what malevolent persons will call *longueurs*. In the first place, I am firmly convinced, the analysis of so curious and so interesting a work as this will give more pleasure to the most fastidious reader than he would derive from the unpublished novel whose place it fills. Besides, any other critic would require at least three articles of the length of this, if he sought to give an adequate explanation of this novel, which often contains a whole book in a single page, and which cannot be explained save by a man to whom the North of Italy is fairly familiar. Finally, let me assure you that, with the help of M. Beyle, I am going to try to make myself instructive enough to be read with pleasure to the end.

A sister of the Marchese del Dongo, named Gina, the abbreviation of Angelina, whose early character, as a young girl, would have a certain similarity, could an Italian woman ever resemble a Frenchwoman, to the character of Madame de Lignolle in *Faublas*, marries at Milan, against the will of her brother, who wishes to marry

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her to an old man, noble, rich and Milanese, a certain Conte Pietranera, poor and without a penny.

The Conte and Contessa support the French party, and are the ornament of the Court of Prince Eugène. We are in the days of the Kingdom of Italy, when the story begins.

The Marchese del Dongo, a Milanese attached to Austria and her spy, spends fourteen years waiting for the fall of the Emperor Napoleon. Moreover, this Marchese, the brother of Gina Pietranera, does not live at Milan: he occupies his castle of Grianta, on the Lake of Como; he there brings up his elder son in the love of Austria and on sound principles; but he has a younger son, named Fabrizio, to whom Signora Pietranera is passionately devoted: Fabrizio is a cadet of the family; like her, he will be left without a penny in the world. Who is not familiar with the fondness of noble hearts for the disinherited? Also, she wishes to make something of him. Then, fortunately, Fabrizio is a charming boy; she obtains leave to put him to school at Milan, where, playing truant, she makes him see something of the viceregal court.

Napoleon falls for the first time. While he is on the Island of Elba, in the course of the reaction at Milan, which the Austrians have reoccupied, an insult offered to the Armies of Italy in the presence of Pietranera, who takes it up, is the cause of his death: he is killed in a duel.

A lover of the Contessa refuses to avenge her husband, Gina humiliates him by one of those acts of vengeance, magnificent south of the Alps, which would be thought stupid in Paris. This is her revenge:

Although she despises, *in petto*, this lover who has been adoring her at a distance and without reward for the last six years, she pays certain attentions to the wretch, and, when he is in a paroxysm of suspense, writes to him:

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“Will you act for once like a man of spirit? Please to imagine that you have never known me. I am, with a touch of contempt, your servant,

GINA PIETRANERA.”

Then, to increase still further the desperation of this rich man, with his income of two hundred thousand lire, she *ginginates* (*ginginare* is a Milanese verb meaning everything that passes at a distance between a pair of lovers before they have spoken; the verb has its noun: one is a *gingino*. It is the first stage in love). Well, she *ginginates* for a moment with a fool whom she soon abandons; then she retires, with a pension of fifteen hundred francs, to a third floor apartment where all Milan of the day comes to see her and admires her.

Her brother, the Marchese, invites her to return to the ancestral castle on the Lake of Como. She goes there, to see once more and to protect her charming nephew, Fabrizio, to comfort her sister-in-law and to plan her own future amid the sublime scenery of the Lake of Como, her native soil and the native soil of this nephew whom she has made her son: she has no children. Fabrizio, who loves Napoleon, learns of his landing from the Gulf of Juan and wishes to go to serve the sovereign of his uncle Pietranera. His mother, who, the wife of a rich Marchese with an income of five hundred thousand lire, has not a penny to call her own, his aunt Gina, who has nothing, give him their diamonds: Fabrizio is in their eyes a hero.

The inspired volunteer crosses Switzerland, arrives in Paris, takes part in the battle of Waterloo, then returns to Italy, where, for having dabbled in the conspiracy of 1815 against the peace of Europe, he is disowned by his father and the Austrian government place him on their index. For him, to return to Milan would be to enter the Spielberg. From this point Fabrizio, in trouble, perse-

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cuted for his heroism, this sublime boy becomes everything in the world to Gina.

The Contessa returns to Milan, she obtains a promise from Bubna and from the men of character whom Austria at this period has put in authority there, not to persecute Fabrizio, whom, following the advice of an extremely shrewd Canon, she keeps in concealment at Novara. Meanwhile, with all these things happening, no money. But Gina is of a sublime beauty, she is the type of that Lombard beauty (*bellezza folgorante*) which can be realised only at Milan and in the Scala when you see assembled there the thousand beautiful women of Lombardy. The events of this troubled life have developed in her the most magnificent Italian character: she has intellect, shrewdness, the Italian grace, the most charming conversation, an astonishing command of herself; in short, the Contessa is at one and the same time Madame de Montespan, Catherine de' Medici, Catherine II, too, if you like: the most audacious political genius and the most consummate feminine genius, hidden beneath a marvellous beauty. Having watched over her nephew, despite the hatred of the elder brother who is jealous of him, despite the hatred and indifference of the father, having snatched him from these perils, having been one of the queens of the court of the Viceroy Eugène, and then nothing; all these crises have enriched her natural forces, exercised her faculties and awakened the instincts numbed in the depths of her being by her early prosperity, by a marriage the joys of which have been rare, owing to the continual absence of Napoleon's devoted servant. Everyone sees or can divine in her the thousand treasures of passion, the resources and the refulgence of the most perfect feminine heart.

The old Canon, whom she has seduced, sends Fabrizio to Novara, a small town in Piedmont, under the tutelage of

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a parish priest. This priest puts a stop to the inquiries of the police by his description of Fabrizio: "a younger son who feels wronged because he is not the eldest." When Gina, who had dreamed of Fabrizio's becoming aide-de-camp to Napoleon, sees Napoleon banished to St. Helena, she realises that Fabrizio, his name inscribed in the black book of the Milanese police, is lost to her for ever.

During the uncertainties which prevailed throughout Europe at the time of the battle of Waterloo, Gina has made the acquaintance of Conte Mosca della Rovere, the Minister of the famous Prince of Parma, Ranuccio-Ernesto IV.

Let us pause at this point.

Certainly, after having read the book, it is impossible not to recognise, in Conte Mosca, the most remarkable portrait that anyone could ever make of Prince Metternich, but of a Metternich transported from the great Chancellory of the Austrian Empire to the modest State of Parma. The State of Parma and Ernesto IV seem to me similarly to be the Duke of Modena and his Duchy. M. Beyle says of Ernesto IV that he is one of the richest Princes in Europe: the wealth of the Duke of Modena is famous. In seeking to avoid personalities the author has expended more ingenuity than Walter Scott required to construct the plot of *Kenilworth*. Indeed, these two similarities are vague enough, outwardly, to be denied, and so real inwardly that the well-informed reader cannot be mistaken. M. Beyle has so exalted the sublime character of the Prime Minister of the State of Parma that it is doubtful whether Prince Metternich be so great a man as Mosca, although the heart of that celebrated statesman does offer, to those who know his life well, one or two examples of passions of a compass at least equal to that of Mosca's. It is not slandering the Austrian Minister to believe him capable of all the secret greatnesses

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of Mosca. As for what Mosca is throughout the book, as for the conduct of the man whom Gina regards as the greatest diplomat in Italy, it took genius to create the incidents, the events and the innumerable and recurring plots in the midst of which this immense character unfolds. All that M. de Metternich has done during his long career is not more extraordinary than what you see done by Mosca. When one comes to think that the author has invented it all, unravelled all the plot and then unravelled it, as things do ravel and unravel themselves at a court, the most daring mind, a mind to which the conception of ideas is a familiar process, is left dazed, stupefied before so huge a task. As for myself, I suspect some literary Aladdin's-lamp. To have dared to put on the stage a man of the genius and force of M. de Choiseul, Potemkin, M. de Metternich, to create him, to justify the creation by the actions of the creature himself, to make him move in an environment which is appropriate to him and in which his faculties have full play, is the work not of a man but of a fairy, a wizard. Bear in mind that the most skilfully complicated plots of Walter Scott do not arrive at the admirable simplicity which prevails in the recital of these events, so numerous, so *thickly foliaged*, to borrow the famous expression of Diderot.

Here is the portrait of Mosca. We are in 1816, remember.

"He might have been forty or forty-five; he had strongly marked features, with no trace of self-importance, and a simple and light-hearted manner which told in his favour; he would have looked very well indeed, if a whim on the part of his Prince had not obliged him to wear powder on his hair as a proof of his soundness in politics."

And so the powder which M. de Metternich wears, and which softens a face already so gentle, is justified in Mosca by the will of his master. In spite of the prodigious

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efforts of M. Beyle, who, on page after page, naturalises in this State marvellous inventions to deceive his reader and blunt the point of his allusions, the mind is at Modena and will on no account consent to remain at Parma. Whoever has seen, known, met M. de Metternich, thinks that he hears him speaking through the mouth of Mosca, lends Mosca his voice and clothes him in his manners. Although, in the book, Ernesto IV dies, and the Duke of Modena is still living, one is often reminded of that Prince *so notorious for his severities, which the Liberals of Milan called cruelties*. Such are the expressions used by the author in speaking of the Prince of Parma.

In these two portraits, begun with a satirical intention, there is, however, nothing that can wound, nothing that reeks of vengeance. Although M. Beyle has no cause to thank M. de Metternich, who refused him his *exequatur* for the Trieste Consulate, and although the Duke of Modena has never been able to look with pleasure on the author of *Rome, Naples et Florence*, of the *Promenades en Rome*, and of certain other works, these two figures are portrayed with great taste and the utmost propriety.

This is what, no doubt, occurred during the actual work of these two creations. Carried away by the enthusiasm necessary to him who handles clay and scalpel, the brush and colours, the pen and the treasures of man's moral nature, M. Beyle, who had started out to depict a little court in Italy and a diplomat, ended with the type PRINCE and the type PRIME MINISTER. The resemblance, begun with the fantasy of a satirical mind, ceased where the genius of the arts appeared to the artist.

This convention of masks once admitted, the reader, keenly interested, accepts the admirable Italian scene which the author paints, the town and all the buildings necessary to his story, which, in many places, has the magical quality of an Oriental tale.

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This long parenthesis was indispensable. Let us continue.

Mosca is smitten with love, but with a love immense, eternal, boundless, for Gina, absolutely like M. de Metternich and his Leykam. He lets her, at the risk of compromising himself, have the latest diplomatic news before anyone else. The presence at Milan of this Minister of the State of Parma is perfectly accounted for later on.

To give you an idea of this famous Italian love, I must relate to you a distinctly curious incident. On their departure, in 1799, the Austrians saw as they left Milan, on the Bastion, a certain Contessa B——nini who was driving with a Canon, both heedless of revolutions and war: they were in love. The Bastion is a magnificent avenue which starts from the Eastern Gate (Porta Renza) and corresponds to the Champs-Élysées in Paris, with this slight difference that on the left extends the Duomo, “that mountain of gold transmuted into marble,” as Francis II, who had a gift of expression, called it; and on the right the snowy fringe, the sublime chasms of the Alps. On their return in 1814 the first thing the Austrians saw was the Contessa and the Canon, sitting in the same carriage and saying, perhaps, the same things, at the same point on the Bastion. I have seen, in that city, a young man who became ill if he went more than a certain number of streets away from the house of his mistress. When a woman gives an Italian sensations, he never leaves her.

“In spite of his frivolous air and his polished manners, Mosca,” says M. Beyle, “was not blessed with a soul of the French type; he could not *forget* the things that annoyed him. When there was a thorn in his pillow, he would blunt it by repeated stabbings of his throbbing limbs.” This superior man guesses the superior mind of the Contessa, he falls in love with her to the point of behaving like a schoolboy.

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"After all," the Minister said to himself, "old age is only being incapable of indulging in these delicious timidities."

The Contessa one evening remarks the fine, benevolent gaze of Mosca. (The gaze with which M. de Metternich would deceive the Deity.)

"At Parma," she says to him, "if you were to look like that, you would give *them* the hope that they might escape hanging."

In the end the diplomat, having realised how essential this woman is to his happiness, and after three months of inward struggle, arrives with three different plans, devised to secure his happiness, and makes her agree to the wisest of them.

In Mosca's eyes, Fabrizio is a child: the excessive interest which the Contessa takes in her nephew seems to him one of those *elective maternities* which, until love comes to reign there, beguile the hearts of noble-hearted women.

Mosca, unfortunately, is married. Accordingly he brings to Milan the Duca Sanseverina-Taxis. Let me, in this analysis, introduce a few quotations which will give you examples of the vivid, free, sometimes faulty style of M. Beyle, and will enable me to make myself be read with pleasure.

The Duca is a handsome little old man of sixty-eight, dapple-grey, very polished, very neat, immensely rich, but not quite as noble as he ought to have been. Apart from this, the Duca is by no means an absolute idiot, says the Conte; "he gets his clothes and wigs from Paris. He is not the sort of man who would do anything *deliberately* mean, he seriously believes that honour consists in having a Grand Cordon, and he is ashamed of his riches. He wants an Embassy. Marry him, he will give you a hundred thousand scudi, a magnificent jointure, his *palazzo* and the most superb existence in Parma. On these conditions, I

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make the Prince appoint him Ambassador, he will have his Grand Cordon, and he will start the day after his marriage; you become Duchessa Sanseverina, and we live happily. Everything is settled with the Duca, who will be made the happiest man in the world by our arrangement: he will never shew his face again in Parma. If this life does not appeal to you, I have four hundred thousand francs, I hand in my resignation and we go and live at Naples."

"Do you know that what you and your Duca are proposing is highly immoral?" says the Contessa.

"No more immoral than what is done at every court," the Minister answers. "Absolute Power has this advantage, that it justifies everything. Every year we shall be afraid of a 1793, and everything that can reduce that fear will be supremely moral. You shall hear the speeches I make on the subject at my receptions. The Prince has consented, and you will have a brother in the Duca, who has not dared to hope for such a marriage, which saves his face; he thinks himself ruined because he lent twenty-five napoleons to the great Ferrante Palla, a Republican, a poet and something of a genius, whom we have sentenced to death, fortunately in his absence."

Gina accepts. We next see her Duchessa Sanseverina-Taxis, astonishing the court of Parma by her affability, by the noble serenity of her mind. Her house is the most attractive in the town, she reigns there, she is the glory of this little court.

The portrait of Ernesto IV, his reception of the Duchessa, her introduction to each member in turn of the Reigning House, all these details are marvels of wit, depth, succinctness. Never have the hearts of Princes, Ministers, courtiers and women been so depicted. The reader will find it hard to lay the book down.

When the Duchessa's nephew fled from Austrian perse-

cution and was on his way from the Lake of Como to Novara under the protection of his confessor and the parish priest, he met Fabio Conti, General of the Armies of the State of Parma, one of the most curious figures of this court and of the book, a general who thinks of nothing but whether His Highness's soldiers ought to have seven buttons on their uniform or nine; but this comic general possesses an entrancing daughter, Clelia Conti. Fabrizio and Clelia, both trying to escape from the police, have exchanged a few words. Clelia is the most beautiful creature in Parma. As soon as the Prince sees the effect produced in his court by the Sanseverina, he thinks of counter-balancing that beauty by bringing Clelia to light. A great difficulty! Girls are not received at court: he therefore has her created a Canoness.

The Prince has of course a mistress. One of his weaknesses is to ape Louis XIV. So, to be in the picture, he has provided himself with a La Vallière, one Contessa Balbi, who dips her fingers into every money-bag, and is not forgotten when any government contract is made. Ernesto IV would be in despair if the Balbi were not slightly grasping: the scandalous fortune of his mistress is a sign of royal power. He is lucky, the Contessa is a miser!

"She received me," the Duchessa tells Mosca, "as though she expected me to give her a *buona mancia* (a tip)."

But, to the great grief of Ernesto IV, the Contessa, who has no brains, cannot be compared for a moment to the Duchessa; this humiliates him, a first source of irritation. His mistress is thirty, and a model of Italian *leggiadria*.

"She had still the finest eyes in the world and the most graceful little hands;¹ but her skin was netted with count-

¹ So Balzac, reading *les petites mains les plus gracieuses*. Stendhal's words are *les petites mines*, and he makes the lady a

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less fine little wrinkles which made her look like a young grandmother. As she was obliged to smile at everything the Prince said, and sought to make him think, by this ironical smile, that she understood him, Conte Mosca used to say that these suppressed yawns had in course of time produced her wrinkles.

The Duchessa parries the first blow aimed at her by His Highness by making a friend of Clelia, who, fortunately, is an innocent creature. From motives of policy, the Prince allows to exist at Parma a sort of Party, called Liberal (God knows what sort of Liberals!). A Liberal is a man who has the great men of Italy, Dante, Machiavelli, Petrarch, Leo X painted welcoming Monti on a ceiling. This passes as an epigram against the power which has no longer any great men. This Liberal Party has as its chief a Marchesa Raversi, an ugly and mischievous woman, as irritating as an Opposition. Fabio Conti, the General, belongs to this Party. The Prince, who hangs agitators, has his reasons for allowing a Liberal Party.

Ernesto IV rejoices in a Laubardemont, his Fiscal General or Chief Justice, named Rassi. This Rassi, full of natural intelligence, is one of the most horribly comic or comically horrible personages that can be imagined: he laughs and has people hanged, he makes a game of his justice. He is necessary, indispensable to the Prince. Rassi is a blend of Fouché, Fouquier-Tinville, Merlin, Triboulet and Scapin. You call the Prince a *tyrant*: he says that this is conspiracy and he hangs you. He has already hanged two Liberals. Since this execution, notorious throughout Italy, the Prince, who is brave when on the field of battle and has led armies, the Prince, though a man of spirit, lives in fear. This Rassi becomes something terrible, he attains to gigantic proportions while Marchesa. Balzac's quotations are not, as a rule, textually accurate, but his analysis of the story is admirable. C. K. S. M.

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still remaining grotesque: he embodies all the justice of this little State.

And now for the inevitable effects at court of the Duchessa's triumphs. The Conte and the Duchessa, that pair of eagles caged in this tiny capital, soon begin to offend the Prince. In the first place the Duchessa is sincerely attached to the Conte, the Conte is more in love every day, and this happiness irritates a bored Prince. Mosca's talents are indispensable to the Cabinet of Parma. Ranuccio-Ernesto and his Minister are attached to one another like the Siamese twins. Indeed, they have between them contrived the impossible plan ("impossible" is a rhetorical precaution on M. Beyle's part) of making a single State of Northern Italy. Beneath his mask of absolutism, the Prince is intriguing to become the Sovereign of this Constitutional Kingdom. He is dying of envy to ape Louis XVIII, to give a Charter and Two Chamber government to Northern Italy. He regards himself as a great politician, he has his ambition: he redeems in his own eyes his subordinate position by this plan with which Mosca is fully acquainted; he has control of his treasury! The more need he has of Mosca and the more he recognises his Minister's talent, the more reasons there are in the depths of this princely heart for an unconfessed jealousy. Life at court is boring, at the *palazzo* Sanseverina it is amusing. What means remain to him of demonstrating his power to himself? The chance of tormenting his Minister. And he torments him cruelly! The Prince tries first of all, in a friendly way, to secure the Duchessa as his mistress, she refuses; there are blows to self-esteem the elements of which may easily be guessed from this brief analysis. Presently, the Prince reaches the stage of wishing to attack his Minister through the Duchessa, and he then seeks out ways of making her suffer.

All this part of the novel is of a remarkable literary

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solidity. This painting has the magnitude of a canvas fifty feet by thirty, and at the same time the manner, the execution is Dutch in its minuteness. We come to the drama, and to a drama the most complete, the most gripping, the strangest, the truest, the most profoundly explored in the human heart that has ever been invented, but one that has existed, undoubtedly, at many periods, and will reappear at courts where it will be enacted again, as Louis XIII and Richelieu, as Francis II and Prince Metternich, as Louis XV, the du Barry and M. de Choiseul have enacted it in the past.

The prospect which, in this new setting, has most attracted the Duchessa is that of the possibility of making a career for her hero, for this child of her heart, for Fabrizio her nephew. Fabrizio will owe his fortune to the genius of Mosca. The love which she has conceived for the child she continues to feel for the youth. I may tell you now, beforehand, that this love is to become later on, at first without Gina's knowledge, then consciously, a passion that will reach the sublime. Nevertheless she will always be the wife of the great diplomat, to whom she will never have committed any other act of infidelity than that of the passionate impulses of her heart towards this young idol; she will not deceive this man of genius, she will always make him happy and proud; she will make him aware of her least emotions, he will endure the most horrible rages of jealousy, and will never have any grounds for complaint. The Duchessa will be frank, artless, sublime, resigned, moving as a play of Shakespeare, beautiful as poetry, and the most severe reader will have no fault to find. I doubt if any poet has ever solved such a problem with as much felicity as has M. Beyle in this bold work. The Duchessa is one of those magnificent statues which make us at once admire the art that created them and inveigh against Nature which is so sparing of

such models. Gina, when you have read the book, will remain before your eyes like a sublime statue: it will be neither the Venus de Milo, nor the Venus de' Medici; it will be Diana with the voluptuousness of Venus, with the suavity of Raphael's Virgins, and the movement of Italian passion. Above all, there is nothing French in the Duchessa. Yes, the Frenchman who has modelled, chiselled, wrought this marble, has left nothing on it of his native soil. *Corinne*, you must realise, is a miserable sketch compared with this living, ravishing creature. You will find her great, intellectual, passionate, always true to life, and yet the author has carefully concealed her sensual aspect. There is not in the work a single word that can make one think of the pleasures of love or can inspire them. Although the Duchessa, Mosca, Fabrizio, the Prince and his son, Clelia, although the book and its characters are, in their different ways, passion with all its furies; although it is Italy as it is, with its shrewdness, its dissimulation, its cunning, its coolness, its tenacity, its higher policy in every connexion, *La Chartreuse de Parme* is more chaste than the most puritanical of the novels of Walter Scott. To make a noble, majestic, almost irreproachable character of a duchess who makes a Mosca happy, and keeps nothing from him, is not that a masterpiece of fiction? The *Phèdre* of Racine, that sublime creation of the French stage, which Jansenism did not venture to condemn, is not so beautiful, nor so complete, nor so animated.

Well, at the moment when everything is smiling on the Duchessa, when she is amusing herself with this court life where a sudden storm is always to be feared, when she is most tenderly attached to the Conte, who, literally, is mad with happiness; when he has the patent and receives the honours of Prime Minister *which come very near to those paid to the Sovereign himself*, she says to him one day:

"And Fabrizio?"

The Conte then offers to obtain for her, from Austria, a pardon for this dear nephew.

"But, if he is somewhat superior to the young men who ride their English thoroughbreds about the streets of Milan, what a life, at eighteen, to be doing nothing with no prospect of ever having anything to do! If," says Mosca, "heaven had endowed him with a real passion, were it only for angling, I should respect it; but what is he to do at Milan, even after he has obtained his pardon?"

"I should like him to be an officer," says the Duchessa.

"Would you advise a Sovereign," says Mosca, "to entrust a post which, at a given date, may be of some importance, to a young man who has shown enthusiasm, who, from Como, has gone to join Napoleon at Waterloo? A del Dongo cannot be a merchant, nor a barrister, nor a doctor. You will cry out in protest, but you will come in the end to agree with me. If Fabrizio wishes it, he can quickly become Archbishop of Parma, one of the highest dignities in Italy, and from that Cardinal. We have had at Parma three del Dongo Archbishops, the Cardinal who wrote a book in sixteen-something, Fabrizio in 1700 and Ascanio in 1750. Only, shall I remain Minister long enough? That is the sole objection."

After two months spent in discussion, the Duchessa, defeated on every point by the Conte's observations, and rendered desperate by the precarious position of a younger son of a Milanese family, utters one day this profound Italian saying to her friend:

"Prove to me again that every other career is impossible for Fabrizio."

The Conte proves it.

The Duchessa, susceptible to the thought of fame, sees no other way of salvation, here below, for her dear Fabrizio, than the Church and its high dignities, for the future of Italy lies in Rome, and nowhere else. To anyone who

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has studied Italy carefully, it is clear that the unity of government in that country, that its nationality will never be re-established save by the hand of a Sixtus V. The Pope alone has the power to stir and to reconstitute Italy. And so we see with what pains the Austrian court has watched, for the last thirty years, the elections of Popes, what aged imbeciles she has allowed to don the Triple Crown. "Perish Catholicism sooner than my domination!" seems to be her guiding motto. Miserly Austria would spend a million to prevent the election of a Pope with French ideas. And then, if some fine Italian genius employed sufficient dissimulation to put on the white cassock, he might die like Ganganelli. There perhaps is to be found the secret of the refusals of the Court of Rome, which has not chosen to accept the invigorating potion, the elixir offered to it by men of fine ecclesiastical genius from France: Borgia would not have failed to make them take their seat among his devoted Cardinals. The author of the Bull *In coena Domini* would have understood the great Gallican idea, Catholic Democracy, he would have adapted it to the circumstances. M. de Lamennais, that fallen angel, would not then, in his Breton obstinacy, have abandoned the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church.

So the Duchessa adopts this plan of the Conte. In this great woman there is, as in great politicians, a moment of uncertainty, of hesitation before a plan; but she never goes back upon her resolutions. The Duchessa is always right in wishing what she has wished. Her persistency, that strong quality of her imperious character, imparts an element of terror to all the scenes of this fertile drama.

Nothing could be more clever than the initiation of Fabrizio into his future destiny. The lovers display to Fabrizio the chances of his life. Fabrizio, a boy of astonishing intelligence, grasps everything at once and has a vision of the tiara. The Conte does not pretend to make

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a priest of him of the sort one sees everywhere in Italy. Fabrizio is a great gentleman, he can remain perfectly ignorant if it seems good to him, and will none the less become Archbishop. Fabrizio refuses to lead the life of the *caffè*, he has a horror of poverty, and realises that he cannot be a soldier. When he speaks of going and becoming an American citizen (we are in 1817), he has explained to him the dulness of life in America, without smartness, without music, without love affairs, without war, the cult of the god Dollar, and the respect due to artisans, to the masses who by their votes decide everything. Fabrizio has a horror of *mobocracy*.

At the voice of the great diplomat, who shows him life as it really is, the young man's illusions take flight. He had not understood what is incomprehensible to young people, the "*Surtout pas de zèle!*" of M. de Talleyrand.

"Remember," Mosca says to him, "that a proclamation, a caprice of the heart flings the enthusiast into the bosom of the party opposed to his own future sympathies."

What a phrase! ¹

The instructions given by the Minister to the neophyte who is to return to Parma only as a *Monsignore*, in violet stockings, and whom he sends to Naples to complete his studies with letters of recommendation to the Archbishop there, one of his clever friends; these instructions, given in the Duchessa's drawing-room, during a game of cards, are admirable. A single quotation will show you the fineness of the perceptions, the science of life which the author gives to this great character.

"Believe or not, as you choose, what they teach you, *but never raise any objection*. Imagine that they are

¹ What a phrase, indeed. But it is the Duchessa, not Mosca, who gives this advice to Fabrizio, at Piacenza, and it is the party "opposite to the one he has served all his life" that he is to be flung into. C. K. S. M.

teaching you the rules of the game of whist; would you raise any objection to the rules of whist? And once you knew and had adopted those rules, would you not wish to win? Do not fall into the vulgar habit of speaking with horror of Voltaire, Diderot, Raynal and all those harebrained Frenchmen who have brought us that foolish government by Two Chambers. Speak of them with a calm irony, they are people who have long since been refuted. You will be forgiven a little amorous intrigue, if it is done in the proper way, but they would take note of your objections: age stifles intrigue but encourages doubt. Believe everything, do not yield to the temptation to shine; be morose: discerning eyes will see your cleverness in yours and it will be time enough to be witty when you are an Archbishop!"

The astonishing and fine superiority of Mosca is never lacking, either in action or in speech; it makes this book one as profound, from page to page, as the *Maxims* of La Rochefoucauld. And observe that their passion leads the Conte and Duchessa to make mistakes, they are obliged to bring their talent into play to atone for them. To another man who had consulted him, the Conte would have explained the misfortunes that would await him at Parma after the death of Ernesto IV. But his passion has made him completely blind to his own interests. Talent alone can make you discover this poignant touch of comedy for yourself. Great politicians are nothing more, after all, than equilibrists who, if they do not take care, see their finest edifice come crashing to the ground. Richelieu was only saved from his peril, on the Day of the Dupes, by the broth of the Queen Mother, who refused to go to Saint-Germain without having taken the *lait de poule* which preserved her complexion. The Duchessa and Mosca live by a perpetual expenditure of all their faculties; and so the reader who follows the spectacle of their life is

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kept in a trance, through chapter after chapter, so well are the difficulties of this existence set before him, so cleverly are they explained. Finally, let us note well, these crises, these terrible scenes are woven into the substance of the book: the flowers are not stitched on, they are of the same substance as the rest.

"We must keep our love secret," the Duchessa says sadly to her lover, on the day on which she has guessed that his struggle with the Prince has begun.

When, to outact his acting, she lets Ernesto IV gather that she is only moderately in love with the Conte, she gives him a day of happiness; but the Prince is shrewd, he sees sooner or later that he has been tricked. And his disappointment adds violence to the storm brought about by her ill-wishers.

This great work could not have been conceived or executed save by a man of fifty, in the full vigour of his age and in the maturity of all his talents. One sees perfection in every detail. The character of the Prince is drawn by the hand of a master, and is, as I have told you, *The Prince*. One conceives him admirably, as a man and as sovereign. This man might be at the head of the Russian Empire, he would be capable of ruling it, he would be great; but the man would remain what he is, liable to vanity, to jealousy, to passion. In the seventeenth century, at Versailles, he would be Louis XIV and would avenge himself on the Duchessa, as did Louis XIV on Fouquet. Criticism can find no fault in the greatest or in the smallest character; they are all what they ought to be. There is life and especially the life of courts, not drawn in caricature, as Hoffmann has tried to draw it, but seriously and ironically. Finally, this book explains to you admirably all that Louis XIII's *camarilla* made Richelieu suffer. This work applied to vast interests like those of the cabinet of Louis XIV, of Pitt's cabinet, of Napoleon's

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cabinet or of the Russian cabinet, would have been impossible owing to the prolixities and explanations which so many veiled interests would have required; whereas you get a comprehensive view of the State of Parma; and Parma enables you to understand, *mutato nomine*, the intrigues of the most exalted court. Things were like this under the Borgia Pope, at the court of Tiberius, at the court of Philip II; they must be like this also at the court of Peking!

Let us enter into the terrible Italian drama which has been slowly and logically preparing itself in a charming manner. I spare you the details of the court and its original figures; the Princess who thinks it her duty to be unhappy, because the Prince has his Pompadour; the Heir Apparent who is kept caged; the Princess Isotta, the Chamberlain, the Minister of the Interior, the Governor of the Citadel, Fabio Conti. One cannot afford to take the least thing lightly. If, like the Duchessa, Fabrizio and Mosca, you accept the court of Parma, you play your game of whist and your interests are at stake. When the Prime Minister thinks that he has fallen from power, he says quite seriously:

“When our guests have gone, we can decide on a way of barricading ourselves for the night; the best plan would be to set off while they’re dancing for your place at Sacca, by the Po, from where in twenty minutes one can get into Austria.”

Indeed the Duchessa, the Minister, every Parmesan subject is liable to end his days in the citadel.

When the Prince confesses his desires to the Duchessa and she in reply asks him:

“How should we ever look Mosca in the face again, that man of genius and heart?”

“I have thought of that,” says the Prince: “we should never look him in the face again! The citadel waits.”

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The Sanseverina does not fail to repeat this saying to Mosca, who puts his affairs in order.

Four years elapse.

The Minister, who has not allowed Fabrizio to come to Parma during these four years, permits him to reappear there when the Pope has created him Monsignore, a kind of dignity which entitles him to wear violet stockings. Fabrizio has nobly answered the expectations of his political master. At Naples he has had mistresses, he has had the passion for archæology, he has sold his horses to make excavations, he has behaved well, he has aroused no jealousy, he may become Pope. What delights him most about his return to Parma is the thought of being delivered from the attentions of the charming Duchessa d'A——. His governor, who has made him an educated man, receives a Cross and a pension. Fabrizio's first appearance at Parma, his arrival, his various presentations at court, form the highest comedy of manners, character and intrigue that one can read anywhere. At more than one point, the better class of reader will lay down this book on his table to say to himself:

"Heavens! How good this is, how exquisitely arranged, how deep!"

He will meditate upon words like the following, for instance, upon which Princes ought to meditate well for their own good: *People with brains who are born on the throne or at the foot of it soon lose all fineness of touch; they proscribe, in their immediate circle, freedom of conversation which seems to them coarseness, they refuse to look at anything but masks and pretend to judge the beauty of complexions; the amusing part of it is that they imagine their touch to be of the finest.*

Here begin the Duchessa's ingenuous passion for Fabrizio, and Mosca's torments. Fabrizio is a diamond that has lost nothing by being polished. Gina, who had sent

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him to Naples a devil-may-care young rough-rider, whose horsewhip seemed to be an inherent part of his person, sees him now with a noble and confident bearing before strangers, and in private the same fire of youth.

"This nephew," Mosca tells his mistress, "is made to adorn all the exalted posts." But the great diplomat, attentive at first to Fabrizio, turns to look at the Duchessa and notices *a curious look in her eyes*. "I am in my fifties," he reflects.

The Duchessa is so happy that she does not give the Conte a thought. This profound effect, made on Mosca by a single glance, is irremediable.

When Ranuccio-Ernesto IV guesses that the aunt loves the nephew a little more warmly than the laws of consanguinity permit, which at Parma is incest, he is at the pinnacle of happiness. He writes his Minister an anonymous letter on the subject. When he is sure that Mosca has read it, he sends for him, without giving him time to call first on the Duchessa, and keeps him on the rack throughout a conversation full of princely friendliness and hypocrisy. Certainly the pangs of love causing a fine heart to bleed always make an effective scene; but this heart is Italian, this is the heart of a man of genius, and I know nothing that grips me so as the chapter on Mosca's jealousy.

Fabrizio does not love his aunt; he adores her as an aunt, she inspires no longing in him as a woman; nevertheless, in their conversations, a gesture, a word may make youth break out, the least thing may then make his aunt leave Parma, because riches, honours are nothing to her who, once already, before the eyes of all Milan, has managed to live on a third floor, with an income of fifteen hundred francs. The future Archbishop sees an abyss open before him. The Prince is as happy as a king, while waiting for a catastrophe to destroy the private happiness of his dear

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Minister. Mosca, the great Mosca, weeps like a child. The prudence of this dear Fabrizio, who understands Mosca and understands his aunt, prevents any disaster. The Monsignore makes himself fall in love with a little Marietta, an actress of the lowest grade, a columbine who has her harlequin, a certain Giletti, formerly one of Napoleon's dragoons, and a fencing master, a man horrible in mind and body, who devours Marietta, beats her, steals her blue shawls and all her earnings.

Mosca breathes again. The Prince is uneasy, his prey is escaping, he could hold the Sanseverina by her nephew, and now the nephew turns out a profound politician! In spite of Marietta, the Duchess's passion is so artless, her familiarities are so dangerous, that Fabrizio, to restore tranquillity, proposes to the Conte, who also is an antiquarian and is engaged on excavations, to go down to the country and superintend the work. The Minister adores Fabrizio. The company which includes Marietta, her *mammaccia*—a figure drawn in four pages with an astounding truth and depth of character—and Giletti, the whole motley crew, leave Parma. This trio, Giletti, the *mammaccia* and Marietta come along the road while Fabrizio is shooting. There follows an encounter between the dragoon, who seeks, in an access of Italian vanity, to *kill the black-frock*, and Fabrizio, who is amazed at seeing Marietta on the road. This accidental duel becomes serious when Fabrizio sees that Giletti, who has only one eye, is trying to disfigure him: he kills him. Giletti was plainly the aggressor, the workmen engaged on the excavations saw everything, Fabrizio realises all the capital that the Raversi faction and the Liberals will make out of this ridiculous adventure against himself, the Ministers, his aunt; he takes flight, he crosses the Po. Thanks to the clever assistance of Lodovico, an old servant of the Sanseverina household, a fellow who writes sonnets, he finds

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shelter and reaches Bologna, where he sees Marietta again. Lodovico becomes fanatically attached to Fabrizio. This retired coachman is one of the most complete of the figures of the second magnitude. Fabrizio's flight, the scenery by the Po, the descriptions of famous places through which the young prelate passes, his adventures during his exile from Parma, his correspondence with the Archbishop, another character admirably drawn, the smallest details are of a literary execution that bears the hall-mark of genius. And all is so Italian as to make one take the coach and fly to Italy, there to seek this drama and this poetry. The reader becomes Fabrizio.

During this absence, Fabrizio goes to revisit his native scenes, the Lake of Como and the paternal castle, despite the dangers of his position with regard to Austria, at that time very strict. We are in 1821, a time when a passport was not to be treated lightly. The prelate recognised as Fabrizio del Dongo may be sent to the Spielberg. In this part of the book the author completes the portrait of a fine head, that of a Priore Blanès, a simple village curate, who adores Fabrizio and cultivates the study of judicial astrology. This portrait is done so seriously, there shines from it so great a faith in the occult sciences, that the satire of which those sciences—to which we shall return and which do not rest, as has been supposed, upon false foundations—might naturally be the object dies away on the lips of the incredulous. I do not know what the author's opinion may be, but he justifies that of the Priore Blanès. Priore Blanès is a character who is true in Italy. The truth of him can be felt, just as one can tell whether one of Titian's heads is the portrait of a Venetian gentleman or a fancy.

The Prince orders the preparation of the case against Fabrizio, and in this task the genius of Rassi is revealed. The Fiscal General sends the witnesses for the defence

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out of the country, purchases evidence for the prosecution, and, as he impudently informs the Prince, produces out of this foolish affair—the death inflicted on a Giletti by a del Dongo, in self-defence, by a del Dongo who had received the first blow!—a sentence of detention for twenty years in the fortress. The Prince would have liked a death sentence, in order to *exercise clemency* and so humiliate the Sanseverina.

“But,” says Rassi, “I have done better than that, I have broken his neck, his career is barred to him for ever. The Vatican can do nothing more for a murderer.”

So the Prince holds the Sanseverina in his clutches at last! Ah! It is then that the Duchess becomes superb, that the court of Parma is agitated, that the lights go up on the drama, which assumes gigantic proportions. One of the finest scenes in modern fiction is, certainly, that in which the Sanseverina comes to pay her farewell to the Sovereign and presents him with an *ultimatum*. The scene of Elizabeth, Amy and Leicester in *Kenilworth* is no greater, more dramatic nor more terrible. The tiger is braved in his den; the serpent is caught, in vain does he writhe his coils and beg for pity, the woman crushes him. Gina desires, dictates, obtains from the Prince a rescript annulling the proceedings. She does not seek a pardon, the Prince will state that the proceedings are unjust and shall have no consequences in the future, which is an absurd thing to expect of an absolute Sovereign. This absurdity she demands, she obtains it. Mosca is magnificent in this scene where the lovers are alternately saved, lost, in peril for a gesture, a word, a glance!

In every walk of life, artists have an invincible self-respect, a sense of their art, a professional conscience which is ineradicable from the man. One does not corrupt, one never succeeds in buying this conscience. The actor who wishes most harm to his theatre or to an author

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will never play a part badly. The chemist, called in to look for arsenic in a body, will find it if there is any there. The writer, the painter, are always faithful to their genius, even at the foot of the scaffold. This does not exist in woman. The universe is the stepping-stone of her passion. And so woman is greater and finer than man in this respect. Woman is passion; man is action. If this were not so, man would not adore woman. And so it is in the social circle of the court, which gives the greatest flight to her passion, that woman sheds her most brilliant radiance. Her finest stage is the world of Absolute Power. That is why there are no longer any women in France. Now Conte Mosca suppresses, from a trace of ministerial self-respect, in the Prince's rescript, the words on which the Duchessa depends. The Prince imagines that his Minister considers him before the Sanseverina, and casts a glance at him which the reader intercepts. Mosca, like a true statesman, will not countersign a stupid thing, that is all: the Prince is mistaken. In the intoxication of her triumph, rejoicing that she has saved Fabrizio, the Duchessa, who trusts in Mosca, does not peruse the rescript. She was thought to be ruined, she had made all preparations for her departure in the face of Parma, she returns from the court having effected a revolution. Mosca was thought to be in disgrace. Fabrizio's sentence was taken as an insult by the Prince to the Duchessa and Minister. Not at all, the Raversi is banished. The Prince laughs, he is holding his vengeance in reserve: this woman who has humiliated him, he is going to make die of grief.

The Marchesa Raversi, instead of composing Ovidian *Tristia*, like everyone who is banished from a court where he or she handled the reins of power, sets to work. She guesses what has happened in the Prince's cabinet, she extracts his secrets from Rassi, who allows her to do so; he is aware of the Prince's intentions. The Marchesa has

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some letters written by the Duchessa, she sends her lover to the galleys at Genoa to get a letter forged from the Duchessa to Fabrizio, telling him of her triumph, and appointing a meeting at her country house, Sacca, close to the Po, a delicious spot where the Duchessa always spends the summer. Poor Fabrizio hastens there, he is caught, they put handcuffs on him, he is shut up in the citadel, and while they are shutting him up, he recognises the daughter of the governor, Fabio Conti, the lovely and sublime Clelia, for whom he is to feel that eternal love that gives no respite.

Fabrizio del Dongo, her nephew, he whom she adores, in the most honourable fashion, in the citadel! . . . Imagine the Duchessa's feelings! She learns of Mosca's mistake. She will not see Mosca again. There is only Fabrizio now in the world! Once inside that terrible fortress, he may die there, die there by poison!

This is the Prince's system: a fortnight of terror, a fortnight of hope. And he will handle this fiery steed, this proud soul, this Sanseverina whose triumphs and happiness, though necessary to the brilliance of his court, were insulting to his inner man. Played on in this way, the Sanseverina will become thin, old and ugly: he will knead her like dough.

This terrible duel in which the Duchessa has inflicted the first wound, piercing her adversary to the heart but without killing him, in which she will receive for the next year a fresh wound daily, is the most powerful thing that the genius of the modern novel has invented.

Let us turn now to Fabrizio in prison, and so come to my analysis of that chapter, which is one of the diamonds on this crown.

The episode of the robbers in Lewis's *Monk*, his *Anaconda*, which is his best book, the interest of the last volumes by Mrs. Radcliffe, the thrilling vicissitudes in the

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Red Indian romances of Cooper, all the extraordinary things I know in the narratives of travels and prisoners, none of these can compare with the confinement of Fabrizio in the fortress of Parma, three hundred and something feet above the ground. This terrifying abode is a *Vaucluse*: he makes love there to Clelia, he is happy there, he displays the ingenuity of prisoners, and he prefers his prison to the most enchanting spot that the world has to offer. The Bay of Naples is beautiful only through the eyes of Lamartine's *Elvire*; but, in the eyes of a Clelia, in the trills of her voice, there are whole universes. The author depicts, as he knows how to depict, by little incidents which have the eloquence of Shakespearean action, the progress of the love between these two fair creatures, amid the dangers of an imminent death by poison. This part of the book will be read with halting breath, straining throat, avid eyes by all those readers who have imagination, or simply hearts. Everything in it is perfect, rapid, real, without any improbability or strain. There you find passion in all its glory, its rendings, its hopes, its melancholies, its returns, its abatements, its inspirations, the only ones that equal those of genius. Nothing has been forgotten. You will read there an encyclopædia of all the resources of the prisoner; his marvellous languages for which he makes use of nature, the means by which he gives life to a song and meaning to a sound. Read in prison, this book is capable of killing a prisoner, or of making him tunnel through his walls.

While Fabrizio is inspiring love and feeling it, during the most engrossing scenes of the drama inside the prison, there is, you must understand, a fight to the death going on outside the fortress. The Prince, the governor, Rassi, attempt to poison him. Fabrizio's death is determined upon at a moment when the Prince's vanity is mortally wounded. The charming Clelia, the most delicious figure you could

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see in a dream, then reveals the extent of her love by helping Fabrizio to escape, although his rescuers have nearly killed her father, the General.

At this crisis in the book, we understand all the incidents that have gone before. Without those adventures in which we have seen the people, in which we have watched them acting, nothing would be intelligible, everything would seem false and impossible.

Let us return to the Duchessa. The courtiers, the Raversi party triumph in the griefs of this noble woman. Her calm is killing the Prince, and no one can explain it to him. Mosca himself does not understand it. Here, we see that Mosca, great as he is, is inferior to this woman who, at this moment, seems to you to be the genius of Italy. Profound is her dissimulation, bold are her plans. As for her revenge, it will be complete. The Prince has been too greatly offended, she sees him implacable; between them, the duel is to the death; but the Duchessa's vengeance would be impotent, imperfect, if she allowed Ranuccio-Ernesto IV to take Fabrizio from her by poison. Fabrizio must be set at liberty. This attempt seems literally impossible to every reader, so carefully has *tyranny* taken its precautions, so deeply has it involved the governor, Fabio Conti, whose honour is at stake if he does not guard his prisoners.

There is in this man something of Hudson Lowe, but of a Hudson Lowe magnified to the tenth degree; he is Italian, and wishes to avenge the Raversi for the disgrace that the Duchessa has brought on her. Gina fears nothing. This is why:

"The lover thinks more often of penetrating to his mistress's chamber than the husband of guarding his wife; the prisoner thinks more often of escaping than the gaoler of shutting his door; therefore, in spite of the obstacles

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in their way, the lover and the prisoner must succeed in the end."

She will help him! Oh, what a fine painting of this Italian in despair, who cannot flee from this abhorrent court! "Come," she says to herself, "*forward, unhappy woman*" (we weep as we read this great feminine utterance), "do your duty, pretend to forget Fabrizio!" "*Forget him!*" the word saves her: she has not been able to shed a tear until this word. Then the Duchessa conspires, she conspires with the Prime Minister, whom she has ostensibly banished in disgrace, but who would set Parma on fire and deluge it with blood for her, who would kill everyone, the Prince even. This true lover realises that he is in the wrong, he is the most wretched of men. Alas! What a feeble excuse! He did not believe his master to be so false, so cowardly, so cruel. And so he admits that his mistress is entitled to be implacable. He finds it natural that Fabrizio should be, at this moment, everything in the world to her, he has that weakness of great men for their mistresses which leads them to understand even the infidelity which may mean their death. The enamoured veteran is sublime! He says but one word to himself, in the scene when Gina has made him come to her for their rupture. A single night has ravaged the Duchessa.

"Great God!" exclaims Mosca to himself, "she looks all her forty years to-day!"

What a book is this in which one finds these cries of passion, these profound diplomatic sayings, and on every page. Note this as well: you will not meet in this book those extra flourishes, so aptly named *tartines*. No, the characters act, reflect, feel, and always the drama sweeps on. Never does the poet, a dramatist in his ideas, stoop in his path to pick the smallest flower, everything has the rapidity of a dithyramb.

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Let us proceed! The Duchessa is ravishing in her admissions to Mosca, and sublime in her despair. Finding her so changed, he supposes her to be ill, and wishes to send for Razori, the leading doctor in Parma and in Italy.

"Is that the counsel of a traitor or of a friend?" she asks. "You wish to convey to a stranger the measure of my despair!"

"I am lost," thinks the Conte, "she no longer includes me even among the common men of honour."

"Bear in mind," the Duchessa tells him with the most imperious air, "that I am not distressed by the capture of Fabrizio, that I have not the least shadow of a desire to go away, that I am full of respect for the Prince. As for yourself: I intend to have the entire control of my own behaviour, I wish to part from you as an old and good friend. Consider that I have reached sixty, the young woman is dead. With Fabrizio in prison, I am incapable of love. Finally, I should be the unhappiest woman in the world were I to compromise your future. If you see me making a show of having a young lover, do not let yourself be distressed by that. I can swear to you, by Fabrizio's future happiness, that I have never been guilty of the slightest infidelity towards you, and that in five whole years . . . that is a long time!" she says, trying to smile. "I swear to you that I have never either planned or wished such a thing. Now you understand that, leave me."

The Conte goes, he spends two days and two nights in thought.

"Great heavens!" he at length exclaims, "the Duchessa never said a word to me about an escape; can she have been wanting in sincerity for once in her life, and is the motive of her quarrel only a desire that I should betray the Prince? No sooner said than done."

Did I not tell you that this book was a masterpiece,

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and can you not see it for yourself, merely from this rough analysis?

The Minister, after this discovery, treads the ground as if he were a boy of fifteen, takes a new lease of life. He is going to seduce Rassi from the Prince, and make him his own creature.

"Rassi," he says to himself, "is paid by his master to carry out the sentences that disgrace us throughout Europe, but he will not refuse to let himself be paid by me to betray his master's secrets. He has a mistress and a confessor. The mistress is of so low an order that the market woman would know the whole story by to-morrow morning."

He goes to say his prayers at the cathedral and to find the Archbishop.

"What sort of man is Dugnani, the Vicar of San Paolo?" he asks him.

"A small mind with great ambition, few scruples and extreme poverty; for we too have our vices!" says the Archbishop, raising his eyes to heaven.

The Minister cannot help laughing at the analytical depth reached by true piety combined with honesty. He sends for the priest and says to him only:

"You direct the conscience of my friend the Fiscal General; are you sure he has nothing to tell me?"

The Conte is prepared to stake everything: there is only one thing that he wishes to know, the moment at which Fabrizio will be in danger of death, and he does not propose to interfere with the Duchessa's plans. His interview with Rassi is a capital scene. This is how the Conte begins, adopting the tone of the most lofty impertinence:

"What, sir, you carry off from Bologna a conspirator who is under my protection; more than that, you propose to cut off his head, and you say nothing to me about

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it. Do you know the name of my successor? Is it General Conti or yourself?"

The Minister and Fiscal agree upon a plan which allows them to retain their respective positions. I must leave to you the pleasure of reading the admirable details of this continuous web in which the author drives a hundred characters abreast without being more embarrassed than a skilful coachman is by the reins of a ten-horse coach. Everything is in its place, there is not the slightest confusion. You see everything, the town and the court. The drama is amazing in its skill, its execution, its clearness. The air plays over the picture, not a character is superfluous. Lodovico, who on many occasions has proved that he is an honest Figaro, is the Duchessa's right arm. He plays a fine part, he will be well rewarded.

The time has now come to speak to you of one of the subordinate characters who is shown in colossal proportions, and to whom frequent reference is made in the book, namely Ferrante Palla, a Liberal doctor under sentence of death who is wandering through Italy, where he performs his task of propaganda.

Ferrante Palla is a great poet, like Silvio Pellico, but he is what Pellico is not, a Radical Republican. Let us not concern ourselves with the faith of this man. He has faith, he is the Saint Paul of the Republic, a martyr of Young Italy, he is a sublime work of art like the *Saint Bartholomew* at Milan, like Foyatier's *Spartacus*, like Marius pondering over the ruins of Carthage. Everything that he does, everything that he says is sublime. He has the conviction, the grandeur, the passion of the believer. However high you may place, in execution, in conception, in reality, the Prince, the Minister, the Duchessa, Ferrante Palla, this superb statue, set in a corner of the picture, commands your gaze, compels your admiration. In spite of your opinions, constitutional, monarchical or religious,

he subjugates you. Greater than his own misfortunes, preaching Italy from the hollow shelter of his caves, without bread for his mistress and their five children; committing highway robbery to maintain them, and keeping a note of the sums stolen and the persons robbed so as to restore to them this forced loan to the Republic *when he shall have the power to do so*; stealing moreover in order to print his pamphlets entitled: *The necessity for a budget in Italy!* Ferrante Palla is the type of a family of minds to be found in Italy, sincere but misguided, full of talent but ignorant of the fatal results of their doctrine. Send them with plenty of gold to France and to the United States, as Ministers of Absolute Princes! Instead of persecuting them, let them acquire enlightenment, these true men, full of great and exquisite qualities. They will say like Alfieri in 1793: "Little men, at work, reconcile me to the great."

I praise with all the more enthusiasm this creation of Ferrante Palla, having caressed the same figure myself. If I have the trifling advantage over M. Beyle of priority, I am inferior to him in execution. I have perceived this inward drama, so great, so powerful, of the stern and conscientious Republican in love with a Duchess who holds to Absolute Power. My Michel Chrestien, in love with the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse, could not stand out with the relief of Ferrante Palla, a lover after the style of Petrarch of the Duchessa Sanseverina. Italy and its customs, Italy and its scenery, the perils, the starvation of Ferrante Palla are far more attractive than the meagre details of Parisian civilisation. Although Michel Chrestien dies at Saint-Merry and Ferrante Palla escapes to the United States after his crimes, Italian passion is far superior to French passion, and the events of this episode add to their Apennine savour an interest with which it is useless to compete. In a period when everything is lev-

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elled more easily under the uniform of the National Guard and the *Bourgeois* law than under the steel triangle of the Republic, literature is essentially lacking, in France, in those great obstacles between lovers which used to be the source of fresh beauties, of new situations, and which made subjects dramatic. And so it was difficult for the serious paradox of the passion of a Radical for a great lady to escape trained pens.

In no book, unless it be *Old Mortality*, is there to be found a figure of an energy comparable to that which M. Beyle has given to Ferrante Palla, whose name exercises a sort of compulsion over the imagination. Between Balfour of Burley and Ferrante Palla, I have no hesitation, I choose Ferrante Palla; the design is the same; but Walter Scott, great colourist as he may be, has not the thrilling, warm colour, as of Titian, which M. Beyle has spread over his character. Ferrante Palla is a whole poem in himself, a poem superior to Lord Byron's *Corsair*. "Ah! That is how people love!" is what all M. Beyle's feminine readers will say to themselves on reading this sublime and most reprehensible episode.

Ferrante Palla has the most impenetrable of retreats in the neighbourhood of Sacca. He has often seen the Duchessa, he has fallen passionately in love with her. The Duchessa has met him, has been moved, Ferrante Palla has told her everything, as though in the presence of God. He knows that the Duchessa loves Mosca, his own love therefore is hopeless. There is something touching in the Italian grace with which the Duchessa lets him give himself the pleasure of kissing the white hands of a woman with blue blood. He has not clasped a white hand for seven years, and this poet adores beautiful white hands. His mistress, whom he no longer loves, does the heavy work, makes clothes for the children, and he cannot desert a woman who will not leave him, notwithstanding

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the most appalling poverty. These obligations of an honest man become apparent. The Duchessa has compassion for everything, like a true Madonna. She has offered him his pardon! Ah, but Ferrante Palla has, like Carl Sand, his own little sentences to enforce; he has his preaching, his journeyings to rekindle the zeal of Young Italy.

"All those scoundrels, who do so much harm to the people, would live for long years," he says, "and whose fault would that be? What would my father say when I meet him in heaven!"

She then proposes to provide for the needs of the woman and her children, and give him an undiscoverable hiding-place in the *palazzo* Sanseverina.

The *palazzo* Sanseverina includes an immense reservoir, built in the middle ages with a view to prolonged sieges, and capable of supplying the town with water for a year. Part of the *palazzo* is built over this immense structure. The dapple-grey Duca spent the night after their marriage in telling his wife the secret of the reservoir and of its hiding-place. An enormous stone which moves on a pivot will let all the water escape and flood the streets of Parma. In one of the thick walls of the reservoir there is a chamber without light and without much air, which no one would ever suspect; you would have to pull down the reservoir to find it.

Ferrante Palla accepts the hiding-place for evil days, and refuses the Duchessa's money; he has made a vow never to have more than a hundred francs on him. At the moment when she offers him her sequins, he has money; but he lets himself go so far as to accept one sequin.

"I take this sequin, because I love you," he says; "but I am on the wrong side of my hundred by five francs, and, if they were to hang me this minute, I should feel remorse."

"He does really love," the Duchessa says to herself.

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Is not that the simplicity of Italy, taken from life? Molière, writing a novel to describe this people, the only one except the Arabs that has preserved its reverence for vows, could do nothing finer.

Ferrante Palla becomes the Duchessa's other arm in her conspiracy, and is a terrible weapon, his energy makes one shudder! Here is the scene that occurs one evening in the *palazzo* Sanseverina. The lion of the people has emerged from his retreat. He enters for the first time rooms ablaze with regal splendour. He finds there his mistress, his idol, the idol whom he has set above Young Italy, above the Republic and the welfare of humanity; he sees her distressed, tears in her eyes! The Prince has snatched from her him whom she loves best in the world, he has basely deceived her, and this *tyrant* holds the sword of Damocles over the beloved head.

"What is happening here," says this sublime Republican Don Quixote, "is an injustice of which the Tribune of the People ought to take note. On the other hand, as a private citizen, I can give the Signora Duchessa Sanseverina nothing but my life, and I lay it at her feet. The creature you see at your feet is not a puppet of the court, he is a man.—She has wept in my presence," he says to himself, "she is less unhappy."

"Think of the risk you are running," says the Duchessa.

"The Tribune will answer you: 'What is life when the voice of duty speaks?' The man will say to you: 'Here is a body of iron and a heart that fears nothing in the world but your displeasure.'"

"If you speak to me of your feelings," says the Duchessa, "I shall not see you again."

Ferrante Palla departs sadly.

Am I mistaken? Are they not as fine as Corneille, these dialogues? And, remember, such passages abound, they are all, after their kind, at the same high level. Struck

by the beauty of this character, the Duchessa prepares a written document providing for the future of Ferrante's mistress and his five children, without saying anything to him, for she is afraid that he may let himself be killed on learning that his dependents have had this provision made for them.

Finally, on the day when the whole of Parma is discussing the probable death of Fabrizio, the Tribune braves every danger. He enters the *palazzo* at night, he arrives disguised as a Capuchin in the Duchessa's presence; he finds her drowned in tears and voiceless: she greets him with her hand and points to a chair. Palla prostrates himself, prays to God, so divine does her beauty seem to him, and breaks off his prayer to say:

"Once again *he* offers his life."

"Think of what you are saying!" cries the Duchessa with that haggard eye which shews more clearly than sobs that anger is mastering affection.

"He offers his life to place an obstacle in the way of Fabrizio's fate or to avenge it."

"If I were to accept!" she says, gazing at him.

She sees the joy of martyrdom flash in Palla's eye. She rises, goes to look for the deed of gift prepared a month back, for Ferrante's mistress and children.

"Read this!"

He reads it and falls on his knees, he sobs, he almost dies of joy.

"Give me back the paper," says the Duchessa.

She burns it over a candle.

"My name," she tells him, "must not appear. If you are taken and executed, if you are weak, I may be also, and Fabrizio would be in danger. I wish you to sacrifice yourself."

"I will perform the task faithfully, punctually and prudently."

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"If I am discovered and convicted," the Duchessa goes on proudly, "I do not wish to be accused of having corrupted you. Do not put *him* to death until I give the signal. That signal will be the flooding of the streets of Parma, of which you are bound to hear."

Ferrante, delighted by the Duchessa's tone of authority, takes his leave. When he has gone, the Duchessa calls him back.

"Ferrante, sublime man!"

He returns.

"And your children?"

"Bah! You will provide for them."

"Look, here are my diamonds."

And she gives him a little olive-wood box.

"They are worth fifty thousand francs."

"Oh! Signora!" says Ferrante with a start of horror.

"I may perhaps not see you again. Take them, it is my wish."

Ferrante leaves her. The door closes behind him, the Duchessa again calls him back. He sees her standing there, he comes back uneasily. The great Sanseverina throws herself into his arms. Ferrante is on the point of fainting. She allows him to kiss her, frees herself from his embrace when he threatens to become disrespectful, and shews him the door.

She remains standing for some time and says to herself.

"That is the one man who has understood me; Fabrizio would be like that if he could only know me."

I cannot lay too much stress on the merit of this scene. M. Beyle is not in the least a preacher. He does not urge you on to regicide, he gives you a fact, states it as it occurred. No one, not even a Republican, feels the desire to kill a tyrant on reading it. It is the play of private passions, that is all. It is a question of a duel which

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requires extraordinary, but equally matched arms. The Duchessa makes use of Palla to poison the Prince as the Prince makes use of one of Fabrizio's enemies to poison Fabrizio. One can avenge oneself on a king, Coriolanus avenged himself well on his country, Beaumarchais and Mirabeau avenged themselves well on their period which despised them. This is not moral, but the author has told you of it, and washes his hands of it as Tacitus washes his of the crimes of Tiberius. "I am inclined to believe," he says, "that the immoral delight in taking revenge which one finds in Italy springs from the strength of imagination of that race; other races do not forgive, they forget." Thus the moralist explains this energetic people among whom we find so many inventors, who have the richest, the finest imagination, with its accompanying drawbacks. This reflexion is more profound than it appears at a first reading, it explains the rhetorical stupidities which weigh down the Italians, the only race that is comparable to the French, a race superior to the Russians or the English, whose genius has the feminine fibre, that delicacy, that majesty which make it in many respects superior to all other races. From this point the Duchessa regains her advantage over the Prince. Hitherto, she was weak and tricked in this great duel; Mosca, prompted by his courtier's spirit, had been acting as second to the Prince. Now that her revenge is assured, Gina feels her strength. Each step that her thoughts take gives her happiness, she can play her part. The Tribune's courage heightens hers. Lodovico is electrified by her. These three conspirators, on whom Mosca shuts his eyes, while leaving his police free to act against them if they notice anything, arrive at the most extraordinary result.

The Minister has been the dupe of his mistress, he fully believed himself to be in disgrace, as he deserved. If he had not been thoroughly taken in, he could never

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have played the part of a forlorn lover, for happiness admits of no concealment. That fire of the heart has its smoke. But, after the fascination of Ferrante by the Duchessa, her joy enlightens the Minister, he at last guesses her purpose, without knowing how far she has gone.

Fabrizio's escape borders on the miraculous. It has required so much physical strength and such an exercise of intelligence, that the dear boy is on the point of death: the scent of his aunt's clothing and handkerchief revives him. This slight detail, which is not forgotten among a thousand other incidents, will delight those who are in love: it is placed, as might be placed in a *finale* a melody which recalls the sweetest elements of the life of love. All precautions have been carefully taken, there is no indiscretion: Conte Mosca, who is present in person at the expedition with more than two dozen spies, does not receive a single report of it as Minister.

"Now I'm committing high treason," he says to himself, blind with joy.

Everyone has understood his orders without a word said, and escapes in his own way. The business finished, each head has to think of and for itself. Lodovico is the courier, he crosses the Po. Ah! When Fabrizio is out of the reach of his crowned assassin, the Duchessa, who until then had been crouching like a jaguar, coiled like a serpent hidden in the undergrowth, flat as one of Cooper's Indians in the mud, supple as a slave and feline as a deceitful woman, rises to her full height: the panther shews her claws, the serpent is going to sting, the Indian to utter his yell of triumph, she leaps for joy, she is mad. Lodovico, who knows nothing of Ferrante Palla, who says of him in the common phrase: "He is a poor man persecuted because of Napoleon!" Lodovico is afraid that his mistress is going out of her mind. She gives

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him the small property of Ricciarda. He trembles on receiving this regal gift. What has he done to deserve it? "Conspire, and for Monsignore, why that is a pleasure."

It is then, the author tells us, that the Duchessa allows herself to commit an act not only horrible in the eyes of morality, but fatal to the tranquillity of her life. We suppose, of course, that in this hour of bliss, she will forgive the Prince. No.

"If you wish to acquire the property, you must do two things," she tells Lodovico, "and without exposing yourself. You must go back at once across the Po, illuminate my house at Sacca in such a way as to make people think it is on fire. I have prepared everything for this festivity, in case we succeeded. There are lamps and oil in the cellars. Here is a line to my agent. Let the whole population of Sacca drink themselves drunk, empty all my barrels and all my bottles. By the Madonna! If I find one full bottle, one barrel with two fingers of wine left in it, you lose Ricciarda! When that is done, return to Parma and let the water out of the reservoir. Wine for my dear people at Sacca, water for the town of Parma!"

This makes one shudder. It is the Italian spirit, which M. Hugo has perfectly reproduced when he makes Lucrezia Borgia say: "You have given me a ball at Venice, I offer you in return a supper at Ferrara." The two speeches are equivalent. Lodovico sees in this nothing more than a magnificent insolence and an exquisite joke. He repeats: "Wine for the people of Sacca, water for the people of Parma!" Lodovico returns after having carried out the Duchessa's orders, establishes her at Belgirate, and takes Fabrizio, who has still the Austrian police to fear, to Locarno, in Switzerland.

Fabrizio's escape, the illumination of Sacca throw the State of Parma into utter confusion. Little attention is paid to the flooding of the town. A similar event occurred

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at the time of the French invasion. A horrible punishment awaits the Duchessa. She sees Fabrizio dying of love for Clelia, resentful of being First Grand Vicar to the Archbishop and so unable to marry his beloved.

In the arms of his aunt and on Lake Maggiore, he dreams of his dear prison. What then are the sufferings of this woman who has ordered a crime, who has so to speak brought down the moon from the sky by taking this beloved boy out of prison, and who sees him so artless and simple, thinking of other things, refusing to perceive anything, and not allowing himself to succumb to what he had so wisely fled from in the company of his Gina, his mother, his sister, his aunt, his friend who longed to be something more than a friend to him, all this torture is unspeakable; but, in the book, it is felt, it is seen. We are pained by Fabrizio's desertion of the Sanseverina, although we are conscious that the gratification of her love would be criminal. Fabrizio is not even grateful. The ex-prisoner, like a Minister in retirement who dreams of coalitions which will restore him to power, thinks only of his prison; he sends for pictures of Parma, that city abhorrent to his aunt; he puts one of the fortress in his bedroom. Finally, he writes a letter of apology to General Conti for having escaped, so as to be able to say to Clelia that he finds no happiness in liberty without her, and you can imagine what effect this letter (it is taken as a masterpiece of ecclesiastical irony) produces on the General; he swears that he will be avenged. The Duchessa, terrified and brought back to a sense of self-preservation by the futility of her revenge, takes a boatman from each of the villages on Lake Maggiore; she makes them row her out to the middle of the lake; then she tells them that a search may be made for Fabrizio, who served under Napoleon at Waterloo, and bids them keep a sharp watch; she makes herself loved, and obeyed; she pays well, and

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so has a spy in every village; she gives each of them permission to enter her room at any hour, even at night when she is asleep. One evening, at Locarno, during a party, she hears of the death of the Prince of Parma. She looks at Fabrizio.

"I have done this for him; I would have done things a thousand times worse," she says to herself, "and look at him there, silent, indifferent, dreaming about another!"

At this thought she faints. This fainting-fit may be her ruin. The company gathers round her, Fabrizio thinks of Clelia: she sees him, she shudders, she finds herself surrounded by all these curious people, an archpriest, the local authorities, and so forth. She recovers the calm of a great lady, and says:

"He was a great Prince, who was vilely slandered; it is an immense loss for us.—Ah!" she says to herself, when she is alone, "it is now that I have to pay for the transports of happiness and childish joy that I felt in my *palazzo* at Parma when I welcomed Fabrizio there on his return from Naples. If I had said a word, all would have been over, I should have left Mosca. Once he was with me, Clelia would never have meant anything to Fabrizio. Clelia wins, she is twenty. I am almost twice her age. I must die! *A woman of forty is no longer anything save for the men who have loved her in her youth!*"

It is for this reflexion, profound in its shrewdness, suggested by grief and almost entirely true, that I quote this passage. The Duchessa's soliloquy is interrupted by a noise outside, at midnight.

"Good," she says, "they are coming to arrest me; so much the better, it will occupy my mind, fighting them for my head."

It is nothing of the sort. Conte Mosca has sent her their most faithful courier to inform her, before the rest of

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Europe, of recent events at Parma, and of the details of the death of Ranuccio-Ernesto IV: there has been a revolution, the Tribune Ferrante Palla has been on the verge of triumph, he has spent the fifty thousand francs, the price of the diamonds, on the cause of his dear Republic instead of giving them to his children; the rising has been suppressed by Mosca, who served under Napoleon in Spain, and who has displayed the courage of a soldier and the coolness of a statesman; he has saved Rassi, which he will bitterly repent; finally, he gives details of the accession to the throne of Ranuccio-Ernesto V, a young prince who is enamoured of Signora Sanseverina. The Duchessa is free to return. The Princess Dowager, who adores her for reasons which the reader knows and has gathered from the intrigues of the court at the time when the Duchessa reigned there, writes her a charming letter, creates her Duchessa in her own right, and Grand Mistress. It would not, however, be prudent for Fabrizio to return at present, the sentence must be quashed by a retrial of the case.

The Duchessa conceals Fabrizio at Sacca, and returns to Parma triumphant. Thus the subject revives of its own accord without effort, without monotony. There is not the slightest resemblance between the early favour enjoyed by the innocent Sanseverina, under Ranuccio-Ernesto IV, and the favour enjoyed by the Duchessa who has had him poisoned, under Ranuccio-Ernesto V. The young twenty-year-old Prince is madly in love with her, the peril incurred by the criminal is balanced by the boundless power enjoyed by the Dowager's Grand Mistress. This Louis XIII on a small scale finds his Richelieu in Mosca. The great Minister, during the riots, carried away by a *lingering trace of zeal*, of enthusiasm, has called him a boy. The word has remained in the Prince's heart, it has hurt him. Mosca is useful to him; but the

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Prince, who is only twenty years old in politics, is fifty in self-esteem. Rassi is working in secret, he searches among the people and through all Italy, and learns that Ferrante Palla, who is as poor as Job, has sold nine or ten diamonds at Genoa. During the underground burrowings of the Fiscal General joy reigns at court. The Prince, a shy young man like all shy young men, attacks the woman of forty, grows frenzied in his pursuit of her; it is true that Gina, more beautiful than ever, does not look more than thirty, she is happy, she is making Mosca thoroughly happy, Fabrizio is saved, he is to be tried again, acquitted, and will be, when his sentence is quashed, Coadjutor to the Archbishop, who is seventy-eight years old, with the right of eventual succession.

Clelia alone causes the Duchessa any misgivings. As for the Prince, she is amused by him. They act plays at court (those *commedie dell' arte* in which each character invents the dialogue as he goes on, the outline of the plot being posted up in the wings—a sort of glorified charade). The Prince takes the lovers' parts, and Gina is always the leading lady. Literally, the Grand Mistress is dancing upon a volcano. This part of the work is charming. In the very middle of one of these plays, this is what happens. Rassi has said to the Prince: "Does Your Highness choose to pay a hundred thousand francs to find out the exact manner of His august father's death?" He has had the hundred thousand francs, because the Prince is a boy. Rassi has tried to corrupt the Duchessa's head maid, this maid has told Mosca everything. Mosca has told her to let herself be corrupted. Rassi requires one thing only, to have the Duchessa's diamonds examined by two jewellers. Mosca posts counter-spies and learns that one of these inquisitive jewellers is Rassi's brother. Mosca appears, between the acts of the play, to warn the Duchessa, whom he finds in the highest spirits.

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"I have very little time," she says to Mosca, "but let us go into the guard-room."

There she says with a laugh to her friend the Minister:

"You always scold me when I tell you unnecessary secrets; very well, it was I who called Ernesto V to the throne; it was a case of avenging Fabrizio, whom I loved far more than I love him to-day, though always quite innocently. You will scarcely believe in my innocence, but that does not matter, since you love me in spite of my crimes! Very well, there is one crime in my life: Ferrante Palla had my diamonds. I did worse, I let myself be kissed by him so that he should poison the man who wished to poison our Fabrizio. Where is the harm?"

"And you tell me this in the guard-room?" says the Conte, *slightly taken aback!*

This last expression is charming.

"It is because I am in a hurry," she says, "Rassi is on the track; but I have never spoken of insurrection, I abhor Jacobins. Think it over, and give me your advice after the play."

"I will give it you now," replies Mosca without hesitation. "You will buttonhole the Prince behind the scenes, make him lose his head, but without doing anything dishonourable, you understand."

The Duchessa is called to go on the stage, and returns behind the scenes.

Ferrante Palla's farewell to his idol is one of the finest things in this book, where there are so many fine things; but we come now to the capital scene, to the scene which crowns the work, to the burning of the papers in the case drawn up by Rassi, which the Grand Mistress obtains from Ranuccio-Ernesto V and the Princess Dowager, a terrible scene, in which she is now lost, now saved, at the whim of the mother and son who feel themselves overpowered by the force of character of this sort of Princesse

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des Ursins. This scene occupies only eight pages, but it is without parallel in the art of literature. There is nothing analogous to which it can be compared, it is unique. I say nothing of it, it is sufficient to draw attention to it. The Duchessa triumphs, she destroys the proofs and even carries away one of the documents for Mosca, who takes note of the names of some of the witnesses and cries: "It was high time, they were getting warm!" Rassi is in despair: the Prince has given orders for a retrial of Fabrizio's case. Fabrizio, instead of making himself a prisoner, as Mosca wishes, in the town prison, which is under the Prime Minister's orders, returns at once to his beloved citadel, where the General, who thought that his honour had been tarnished by the escape, rigorously confines him with the intention of getting rid of him. Mosca would have answered for him, with his life, in the town prison; but in the citadel Fabrizio is helpless.

This news comes as a bolt from the blue to the Duchessa: she remains speechless and unhearing. Fabrizio's love for Clelia bringing him back to the place where death lies in wait for him and where the girl will give him a moment's happiness for which he must pay with his life—the thought of this crushes her, and Fabrizio's imminent danger is the last straw.

This danger exists already, it is not created to fit the scene, it is the result of the passions aroused by Fabrizio during his former imprisonment, by his escape, by the fury of Rassi who has been forced to sign the order for a fresh trial. And so, even in the most minute details, the author loyally obeys the laws of the poetry of the novel. This exact observation of the rules, whether it come from the calculation, meditation, and natural deduction of a well chosen, well developed and fruitful subject, or from the instinct peculiar to talent, produces this

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powerful and permanent interest which we find in great, in fine works of art.

Mosca, in despair, makes the Duchessa understand the impossibility of getting a young Prince to believe that a prisoner can be poisoned in his State, and offers to get rid of Rassi.

"But," he tells her, "you know how squeamish I am about that sort of thing. Sometimes, at the end of the day, I still think of those two spies whom I had shot in Spain."

"Rassi owes his life, then," replies the Duchessa, "to the fact that I care more for you than for Fabrizio; I do not wish to poison the evenings of the old age which we shall have to spend together."

The Duchessa hastens to the fortress, and is there convinced of Fabrizio's peril; she goes to the Prince. The Prince is a boy who, as the Minister has foreseen, does not understand the danger that can threaten an innocent person in *his* State Prison. He declines to dishonour himself, to pass judgment on his own justice. Finally, in view of the imminence of the peril (the poison has been given), the Duchessa wrests from him the order to set Fabrizio at liberty in exchange for a promise to yield to this young Prince's desires. This scene has an originality of its own after that of the burning of the papers. At that time, Gina's only thought was for herself, now it is for Fabrizio. Fabrizio once acquitted and appointed Coadjutor to the Archbishop with the right of eventual succession, which is tantamount to being made Archbishop, the Duchessa finds a way to elude the consequences of her promise by one of those dilemmas which women who are not in love can always find with a maddening coolness. She is to the end the woman of great character whose career started as you have read. There follows a change in the Ministry. Mosca leaves Parma with his wife, for

the Duchessa and he, both widowed, have now married. But nothing goes well, and at the end of a year the Prince recalls Conte and Contessa Mosca. Fabrizio is Archbishop and in high favour.

There follows the love of Clelia and Archbishop Fabrizio, which ends in the death of Clelia, in that of a beloved child, and in the resignation and withdrawal of the Archbishop, who dies, doubtless after a long expiation, in the Charterhouse of Parma.

I explain this ending to you in a few words, since, in spite of beautiful details, it is sketched rather than finished. If the author had had to develop the romance of the end like that of the beginning, it would have been difficult to know where to stop. Is there not a whole drama in the love of a celibate priest? So there is a whole drama in the love of the Coadjutor and Clelia. Book upon book!

Had M. Beyle some woman in his mind when he drew his Sanseverina? I fancy so. For this statue, as for the Prince and the Prime Minister, there must necessarily have been some model. Is she at Milan? Is she at Rome, at Naples, at Florence? I cannot say. Although I am quite convinced that there do exist women like the Sanseverina, though in very small numbers, and that I know some myself, I believe also that the author has perhaps enlarged the model and has completely idealised her. In spite of this labour, which removes all similarity, one may find in the Princesse B—— certain traits of the Sanseverina. Is she not Milanese? Has she not passed through good and adverse fortune? Is she not shrewd and witty?

You know now the framework of this immense edifice, and I have taken you round it. My hasty analysis, bold, believe me, for it requires boldness to undertake to give you an idea of a novel constructed out of incidents as closely compressed as are those of *La Chartreuse de Parme*;

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my analysis, dry as it may be, has outlined the masses for you, and you can judge whether my praise is exaggerated. But it is difficult to enumerate to you in detail the fine and delicate sculptures that enrich this solid structure, to stop before the statuettes, the paintings, the landscapes, the bas-reliefs which decorate it. This is what happened to me. At the first reading, which took me quite by surprise, I found faults in the book. On my reading it again, the *longueurs* vanished, I saw the necessity for the detail which, at first, had seemed to me too long or too diffuse. To give you a good account of it, I ran through the book once more. Captivated then by the execution, I spent more time than I had intended in the contemplation of this fine book, and everything struck me as most harmonious, connected naturally or by artifice but concordantly.

Here, however, are the errors which I pick out, not so much from the point of view of art as in view of the sacrifices which every author must learn to make to the majority.

If I found confusion on first reading the book, my impression will be that of the public, and therefore evidently this book is lacking in method. M. Beyle has indeed disposed the events as they happened, or as they ought to have happened; but he has committed, in his arrangement of the facts, a mistake which many authors commit, by taking a subject true in nature which is not true in art. When he sees a landscape, a great painter takes care not to copy it slavishly, he has to give us not so much its letter as its spirit. So, in his simple, artless and unstudied manner of telling his story, M. Beyle has run the risk of appearing confused. Merit which requires to be studied is in danger of remaining unperceived. And so I could wish, in the interest of the book, that the author had begun with his magnificent sketch of the battle

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of Waterloo, that he had reduced everything which precedes it to some account given by Fabrizio or about Fabrizio while he is lying in the village in Flanders where he arrives wounded. Certainly, the work would gain in lightness. The del Dongo father and son, the details about Milan, all these things are not part of the book: the drama is at Parma, the principal characters are the Prince and his son, Mosca, Rassi, the Duchessa, Ferrante Palla, Lodovico, Clelia, her father, the Raversi, Giletti, Marietta. Skilled advisers or friends endowed with simple common sense might have procured the development of certain portions which the author has not supposed to be as interesting as they are, and would have called for the excision of several details, superfluous in spite of their fineness. For instance, the work would lose nothing if the Priore Blanès were to disappear entirely.

I will go farther, and will make no compromise, in favour of this fine work, over the true principles of art. The law which governs everything is that of unity in composition; whether you place this unity in the central idea or in the plan of the book, without it there can be only confusion. So, in spite of its title, the work is ended when Conte and Contessa Mosca return to Parma and Fabrizio is Archbishop. The great comedy of the court is finished. It is so well finished, and the author has so clearly felt this, that it is in this place that he sets his Moral, as our forerunners used to do at the end of their fables.

"One can conclude with this moral," he says: "the man who comes to a court risks his happiness, if he is happy; and in any case makes his future depend upon the intrigues of a chambermaid.

"On the other hand, in America, in the Republic, one has to waste one's whole time paying serious court to the

shopkeepers in the street and becoming as stupid as themselves; and there, there is no Opera."

If, beneath the Roman purple and with a mitre on his head, Fabrizio loves Clelia, become Marchesa Crescenzi, and if you were telling us about it, you would then wish to make the life of this young man the subject of your book. But if you wished to describe the whole of Fabrizio's life, you ought, being a man of such sagacity, to call your book *Fabrizio, or the Italian in the Nineteenth Century*. In launching himself upon such a career, Fabrizio ought not to have found himself outshone by figures so typical, so poetical as are those of the two Princes, the Sanseverina, Mosca, Ferrante Palla. Fabrizio ought to have represented the young Italian of to-day. In making this young man the principal figure of the drama, the author was under an obligation to give him a large mind, to endow him with a feeling which would make him superior to the men of genius who surround him, and which he lacks. Feeling, in short, is equivalent to talent. *To feel* is the rival of *to understand* as *to act* is the opposite of *to think*. The friend of a man of genius can raise himself to his level by affection, by understanding. In matters of the heart, an inferior man may prevail over the greatest artist. There lies the justification of those women who fall in love with imbeciles. So, in a drama, one of the most ingenious resources of the artist is (in the case in which we suppose M. Beyle to be) to make a hero superior by his feeling when he cannot by genius compete with the people among whom he is placed. In this respect, Fabrizio's part requires recasting. The genius of Catholicism ought to urge him with its divine hand towards the *Charterhouse of Parma*, and that genius ought from time to time to overwhelm him with the tidings of heavenly grace. But then the Priore Blanès could not perform this part, for it is impossible to cultivate judicial

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astrology and to be a saint according to the Church. The book ought therefore to be either shorter or longer.

Possibly the slowness of the beginning, possibly that ending which begins a new book and in which the subject is abruptly strangled, will damage its success, possibly they have already damaged it. M. Beyle has moreover allowed himself certain repetitions, perceptible only to those who know his earlier books; but such readers themselves are necessarily connoisseurs, and so fastidious. M. Beyle, keeping in mind that great principle: "Unlucky in love, as in the arts, who says too much!" ought not to repeat himself, he, always concise and leaving much to be guessed. In spite of his sphinx-like habit, he is less enigmatic here than in his other works, and his true friends will congratulate him on this.

The portraits are brief. A few words are enough for M. Beyle, who paints his characters both by action and by dialogue; he does not weary one with descriptions, he hastens to the drama and arrives at it by a word, by a thought. His landscapes, traced with a somewhat dry touch which, however, is suited to the country, are lightly done. He takes his stand by a tree, on the spot where he happens to be; he shews you the lines of the Alps which on all sides enclose the scene of action, and the landscape is complete. The book is particularly valuable to travellers who have strolled by the Lake of Como, over the Brianza, who have passed under the outermost bastions of the Alps and crossed the plains of Lombardy. The spirit of those scenes is finely revealed, their beauty is well felt. One can see them.

The weak part of this book is the style, in so far as the arrangement of the words goes, for the thought, which is eminently French, sustains the sentences. The mistakes that M. Beyle makes are purely grammatical; he is careless, incorrect, after the manner of seventeenth-

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century writers. The quotations I have made shew what sort of faults he lets himself commit. In one place, a discord of tenses between verbs, sometimes the absence of a verb; here, again, sequences of *c'est*, of *ce que*, of *que*, which weary the reader, and have the effect on his mind of a journey in a badly hung carriage over a French road. These quite glaring faults indicate a scamping of work. But, if the French language is a varnish spread over thought, we ought to be as indulgent towards those in whom it covers fine paintings as we are severe to those who shew nothing but the varnish. If, in M. Beyle, this varnish is a little yellow in places and inclined to scale off in others, he does at least let us see a sequence of thoughts which are derived from one another according to the laws of logic. His long sentence is ill constructed, his short sentence lacks polish. He writes more or less in the style of Diderot, who was not a writer; but the conception is great and strong; the thought is original, and often well rendered. This system is not one to be imitated. It would be too dangerous to allow authors to imagine themselves to be profound thinkers.

M. Beyle is saved by the deep feeling that animates his thought. All those to whom Italy is dear, who have studied or understood her, will read *La Chartreuse de Parme* with delight. The spirit, the genius, the customs, the soul of that beautiful country live in this long drama that is always engaging, in this vast fresco so well painted, so strongly coloured, which moves the heart profoundly and satisfies the most difficult, the most exacting mind. The Sanseverina is the Italian woman, a figure as happily portrayed as Carlo Dolci's famous head of *Poetry*, Allori's *Judith*, or Guercino's *Sibyl* in the Manfredini gallery. In Mosca he paints the man of genius in politics at grips with love. It is indeed love without speech (the speeches are the weak point in *Clarisse*), active love, always true

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to its own type, love stronger than the call of duty, love, such as women dream of, such as gives an additional interest to the least things in life. Fabrizio is quite the young Italian of to-day at grips with the distinctly clumsy despotism which suppresses the imagination of that fine country; but, as I have said above, the dominant thought or the feeling which urges him to lay aside his dignities and to end his life in a Charterhouse needs development. This book is admirably expressive of love as it is felt in the South. Obviously, the North does not love in this way. All these characters have a heat, a fever of the blood, a vivacity of hand, a rapidity of mind which is not to be found in the English nor in the Germans nor in the Russians, who arrive at the same results only by processes of revery, by the reasonings of a smitten heart, by the slow rising of their sap. M. Beyle has in this respect given this book the profound meaning, the feeling which guarantees the survival of a literary conception. But unfortunately it is almost a secret doctrine, which requires laborious study. *La Chartreuse de Parme* is placed at such a height, it requires in the reader so perfect a knowledge of the court, the place, the people that I am by no means astonished at the absolute silence with which such a book has been greeted. That is the lot that awaits all books in which there is nothing vulgar. The secret ballot in which vote one by one and slowly the superior minds who make the name of such works, is not counted until long afterwards. Besides, M. Beyle is not a courtier, he has the most profound horror of the press. From largeness of character or from the sensitiveness of his self-esteem, as soon as his book appears, he takes flight, leaves Paris, travels two hundred and fifty leagues in order not to hear it spoken of. He demands no articles, he does not haunt the footsteps of the reviewers. He has behaved thus after the publication of each of his books.

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I admire this pride of character or this sensitiveness of self-esteem. Excuses there may be for mendicity, there can be none for that quest for praise and articles on which modern authors go begging. It is the mendicity, the pauperism of the mind. There are no great works of art that have fallen into oblivion. The lies, the complacencies of the pen cannot give life to a worthless book.

After the courage to criticise comes the courage to praise. Certainly it is time someone did justice to M. Beyle's merit. Our age owes him much: was it not he who first revealed to us Rossini, the finest genius in music? He has pleaded constantly for that glory which France had not the intelligence to make her own. Let us in turn plead for the writer who knows Italy best, who avenges her for the calumnies of her conquerors, who has so well explained her spirit and her genius.

I had met M. Beyle twice in society, in twelve years, before the day when I took the liberty of congratulating him on *La Chartreuse de Parme* on meeting him in the Boulevard des Italiens. On each occasion, his conversation has fully maintained the opinion I had formed of him from his works. He tells stories with the spirit and grace which M. Charles Nodier and M. de Latouche possess in a high degree. Indeed he recalls the latter gentleman by the irresistible charm of his speech, although his physique—for he is extremely stout—seems at first sight to preclude refinement, elegance of manners; but he instantly disproves this suspicion, like Dr. Koreff, the friend of Hoffmann. He has a fine forehead, a keen and piercing eye, a sardonic mouth; in short, he has altogether the physiognomy of his talent. He retains in conversation that enigmatic turn, that eccentricity which leads him never to sign the already illustrious name of Beyle, to call himself one day Cotonnet, another Frédéric. He is, I am told, the nephew of the famous and industrious Daru, one of

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the strong arms of Napoleon. M. Beyle was naturally in the Emperor's service; 1815 tore him, necessarily, from his career, he passed from Berlin to Milan, and it is to the contrast between the life of the North and that of the South, which impressed him, that we are indebted for this writer. M. Beyle is one of the superior men of our time. It is difficult to explain how this observer of the first order, this profound diplomat who, whether in his writings or in his speech, has furnished so many proofs of the loftiness of his ideas and the extent of his practical knowledge should find himself nothing more than Consul at Civita-vecchia. No one could be better qualified to represent France at Rome. M. Mérimée knew M. Beyle early and takes after him; but the master is more elegant and has more ease. M. Beyle's works are many in number and are remarkable for fineness of observation and for the abundance of their ideas. Almost all of them deal with Italy. He was the first to give us exact information about the terrible case of the Cenci; but he has not sufficiently explained the causes of the execution, which was independent of the trial, and due to factional clamour, to the demands of avarice. His book *De l'amour* is superior to M. de Sénancour's, he shews affinity to the great doctrines of Cabanis and the School of Paris; but he fails by the lack of method which, as I have already said, spoils *La Chartreuse de Parme*. He has ventured, in this treatise, upon the word *crystallisation* to explain the phenomenon of the birth of this sentiment, a word which has been taken as a joke, but will survive on account of its profound accuracy. M. Beyle has been writing since 1817. He began with a certain show of Liberalism; but I doubt whether this great calculator can have let himself be taken in by the stupidities of Dual Chamber government. *La Chartreuse de Parme* has an underlying bias which

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is certainly not against Monarchy. He finds fault with what he admires, he is a Frenchman.

M. de Chateaubriand said, in a preface to the eleventh edition of *Atala*, that his book in no way resembled the previous editions, so thoroughly had he revised it. M. le Comte de Maistre admits having rewritten *Le Lépreux de la vallée d'Aoste* seventeen times. I hope that M. Beyle also will set to work going over, polishing *La Chartreuse de Parme*, and will stamp it with the imprint of perfection, the emblem of irreproachable beauty which MM. de Chateaubriand and de Maistre have given to their precious books.

This article opened the third and concluding number of Balzac's *Revue Parisienne*, dated September 25, 1840. Each of the earlier numbers had opened with a story, viz.: *Z. Marcas* and *Les Fantaisies de Claudine (Un Prince de la Bohème)* afterwards embodied in the *Comédie Humaine*. This *Etude sur M. Beyle* will be found in *Œuvres complètes de H. de Balzac—XXIII—Œuvres diverses—septième partie—Essais historiques et politiques*—Paris, Michel Lévy Frères, Editeurs, &c., 873, pages 687 to 738. It is also reprinted in Lévy's 1853 edition of *La Chartreuse de Parme*.